best thing I know by Lamartine (in prose); and in the preface to the *Meditations* the so amusing passage about La Fontaine.

This evening my head is splitting as a result of staying up so late. Came in at two in the morning. That dancing-place where I took Kassner is disgraceful. I took away from there nothing but fatigue and disgust.

At the offices of the *Revue des idees** where I had gone to inquire about the fate of Marcel Drouin's articles. Dujardin and Gourmont are there, whom I have not seen since . . . (?) Long before meeting Gourmont, I knew, I had a premonition that in his presence I should feel this discomfort, or rather this hostility. He has always been very considerate with me. But what can I do about it? I have read things by him that reveal a keen mind, a solid intelligence. . . . I collect my thoughts, reason with myself, stiffen myself. This time too I wanted to see him again and I approached him beaming with smiles. But I cannot: he is too ugly. I am not speaking of his superficial misfortune; no, but of a deeper ugliness. I declare that I already knew him to be ugly simply from reading him.

And I try to understand a little better the reason for my suffering in his presence. It comes, I think, even upon reading him, from the fact that with him thought is never a living, suffering thing; he always remains somewhere beyond it and handles it like an instrument. His reasonings, for he does reason and very well, are never involuntary. His thought never bleeds when he touches it; and this is what allows him to operate on it so easily. He brutalizes. What a heartless surgeon! And how I suffer in his presence! That abstract matter that he seizes remains so alive in me! I made great efforts to talk calmly with him, Quinton

arrived . . . and I left.

The discomfort, the suffering that I experience on hearing them talk does not come only from my mind's difficulty in following them, but also, and especially, from a more subtle cause. There is, for thought too, an appropriate beauty, a grace, the lack of which always causes me a certain uneasiness. In their company I think irresistibly of men who, when lifting weights, exercise only their biceps. I do not like big strong arms, I like a harmony of the whole body. Likewise a certain harmony of the mind. As I grow older I can less easily get along without it.

This evening I reread aloud, for Em., *"II Viccolo di Madama Lucre* zia"*[7] How thin it is! hardly appropriate[9] and what a secondary quality

[6] A monthly review (1904-13), edited by Edouard Dujardin and Remy de Gourmont, which was more concerned with philosophy and the sciences than with literature.

[7] "Madame Lucrezia's Alleyway," a short story by Merim^e.